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A DISCOURSE UPON THE SELF-EXISTENCE OF *JESUS CHRIST.*

The FOURTH EDITION.

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Thus ſhalt thou ſay unto the Children of Iſrael, I AM hath ſent me unto you. Exodus iii. 14.



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PREFACE.

SEveral perſons have earneſtly requeſted me to make the following diſcourſe public. When they heard it preached at St. George's, Hanover-ſquare, *and at* St. Dunſtan's in the Weſt, *they found great benefit from it, and they have made me hope it may be as uſeful to others, as it was to them. I have therefore offered it to the public, ſuch as it is. The adorable perſon, of whom it treats, will overlook its imperfections: He knows that it is the produce of a grateful heart, willing to make ſome return, how poor and ſmall ſoever, for the numerous, great, and ineſtimable bleſſings received from his hands. And if it ſhall pleaſe him to make this diſcourſe the means of ſtrengthening one believer, or of converting one unbeliever, may the glory*

be his. I desire no honour but to be an humble instrument in his hands of magnifying and exalting Jesus Christ, *who is above all blessing and praise; for he is over all God blessed for ever.* Amen.

Before the first edition of this discourse was published, two anonymous authors were greatly offended at the bare title in the advertisement, and they were exceedingly bitter in their invectives against it. Writers of no name deserve no notice. I shall not think myself concerned to fight I know not who in the dark. But if any of the opposers of the self-existence of Jesus Christ will write against the proper preface in the Communion Service for Trinity Sunday, and set his name to it, I hope there will be persons found to defend it.

" *It is very meet, right, and our*
" *bounden duty, that we should at all*
" *times and in all places give thanks*
" *unto thee, O Lord, almighty, e-*
" *verlasting*

" *verlaſting God: Who art one God*
" *one Lord; not one only perſon, but*
" *three perſons in one ſubſtance. For*
" *that which we believe of the glory*
" *of the Father, the ſame we believe*
" *of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt,*
" *without any DIFFERENCE or*
" *INEQUALITY.*" *This is my Faith, and upon this authority I built the following diſcourſe. If the church of* England *be miſtaken, then I am; but if ſhe be right in aſſerting, that there is no difference or inequality between the perſons, then I am right in aſſerting that Jeſus Chriſt has the ſame ſelf-exiſtence with the father without any difference or inequality.*

JOHN

JOHN viii. 24.

I ſaid therefore unto you, that ye ſhall die in your ſins: for if ye believe not, that I AM, ye ſhall die in your ſins.

THIS is a very awakening ſcripture, and ought to rouze up your particular attention. The doctrine here maintained is the ſelf-exiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt; which is not a mere ſpeculative point, it is not an indifferent thing, whether you believe it or not; but your eternal ſalvation is ſo much concerned in it, that if you do not believe it you will die in your ſins, and will have every one of them to anſwer for at the tribunal of God. Is not this an intereſting ſubject? Is not every one of us nearly concerned in what is to befal us after death? And has not our Lord here forewarned us what is to befal them, who deny his divinity? *They ſhall die in their ſins?* and this he repeats twice in the text, the more ſtrongly to impreſs it upon their memories. And what is it then *to die in their ſins?* Is it a light trifling matter not worth

worth your care and conſideration? To die in the midſt of the pollution of a ſinful life, to be taken away with all the guilt of it upon your heads, and to find after death no atonement, no mediator, to protect you from the juſt indignation of the moſt holy God, who has declared that he is of purer eyes than to behold the leaſt iniquity — is all this of no conſequence to you? Does not the danger come near enough to alarm even the moſt ſtupid and inſenſible ſinner? But yet this is not the worſt of *dying in their ſins.* It is the moſt ſtriking circumſtance to conſider to what a depth of miſery your pollution and guilt muſt ſink you. Sin and miſery are inſeparably connected, and none can deliver you from ſin, but he who came to take away the ſins of the world; and he cannot deliver you as man, he muſt be God who can have merit ſufficient to take away ſin, therefore if you deny him to be God, your ſins remain, and miſery muſt be your portion — miſery the greateſt you can ſuffer, in ſoul and body, among the condemned ſpirits in hell for ever and ever.

This is the meaning *of dying in your ſins.*

And can there be any truth more affecting or any ſubject more intereſting? Does not the very propoſing it awaken your hopes and fears? Every one of you is concerned at the peril of his eternal happineſs to come to a point in this caſe, and to be determined; and

and therefore, men and brethren, let me intreat you to examine the matter ſtrictly and ſolemnly. The divinity of Jeſus Chriſt is the very foundation of the chriſtian religion. It is the firſt and principal article. The whole reſts upon it; even what is called the morality of the goſpel receives its obligation from his being the true God. If he was in any reſpect inferior to the father, chriſtianity would be altogether the moſt ſtupid and abſurd ſyſtem of religion, and the moſt groſs piece of idolatry that was ever invented in the world: for the chriſtian church has always acknowledged Jeſus Chriſt to be God co-equal and co-eternal with the father, and has offered prayers and praiſes unto him, and ſerved him with every act of religious worſhip: And the church of *England* has given him divine honour in the ſame full and ample manner, as he claimed it, *John* v. 23. "That all men ſhould ho-"nour the ſon, *even as* they honour the "father." Certainly it is neceſſary on all theſe accounts to examine this fundamental point: And let us then conſult the ſacred books upon it, and hear their judgment, and abide by their determination. And they ſpeak as full to the point as any unprejudiced perſon could deſire, and they have ſet the doctrine in ſo clear a light, and it appears to me with ſuch ſtrong evidence, that I have no more doubt of Chriſt's ſelf-exiſ-

tence, than I have of my own exiſtence. And this perfect conviction (which I thank God I find in multitudes of other perſons) makes me wiſh out of love to your ſouls, that every one of you was as perfectly convinced, leaſt ye ſhould die in your ſins; and if ye can but deſire conviction, ye ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God. And may the adorable Jeſus, whoſe honour I am going to defend, now pleàd his own cauſe with you. May he ſend his grace into all your hearts, and convince you that he is a God indeed, while I am ſpeaking upon the two propoſitions contained in the text.

Firſt, Jeſus Chriſt is the ſelf-exiſtent God.

Secondly, If ye believe it not, ye ſhall die in your ſins, *therefore I ſaid unto you, that ye ſhall die in your ſins: for if ye believe not that I AM, ye ſhall die in your ſins.*

Firſt, The ſelf-exiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt is declared in theſe words, believe that I AM, that I have exiſtence in myſelf, and exiſt by a neceſſity of nature: For I made all things, and without me was not any thing made that is made. I am the creator, they are my creatures. And the creator muſt exiſt in a different manner from the creatures. All things are dependent upon me,

me, and have only a derived exiſtence — they are, what I made them, and they continue, as long as I ſupport them. No creature ever came into life without my power, and when I take away their breath they die, and turn again to their duſt: ſo that they have only a dependant being, whereas my exiſtence is neceſſary and underived. I AM is my incommunicable name, and what it means is my incommunicable attribute.

Thus our bleſſed Saviour is the great and eternal I AM. He is Jehovah: for he exiſts in a different manner from all other beings and things, as the word Jehovah denotes. The chriſtian writers, as far as I know, are unanimous in their interpretation of this divine name; they all agree that it relates to the exiſtence of the eſſence, and is deſcriptive of that independent property, by which Jehovah has exiſtence in himſelf, whereas all other beings and things derive their exiſtence from him. And to this the very Jews aſſent, acknowledging that Jehovah ſignifies the eſſence which neceſſarily exiſts. This therefore is a ſettled point. Now our Saviour is frequently called Jehovah in the old teſtament, and thereby the ſelf-exiſtence of the divine nature is aſcribed to him. Thus the Prophet *Iſaiah* xliii. 11. *I, even I, am Jehovah, and beſides me there is no Saviour.* There was no Jeſus, no Saviour, but Jehovah: therefore Jehovah

and Jeſus are one. And again we read, *ch.* xlix. 26. *All fleſh ſhall know, that I Jehovah am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob.* And the prophet *Jeremy*, l. 34. ſays, *Their Redeemer is ſtrong, Jehovah of hoſts is his name* — the name Jehovah belongs to the Redeemer; it is his incommunicable title. And ſince it is agreed on all hands, that Jehovah ſignifies the ſelf-exiſtent eſſence, conſequently Jeſus Chriſt is ſelf-exiſtent, for he is Jehovah. This argument is, I think, very clear and full, and the force of it may be thus ſummed up. Jehovah is ſelf-exiſtent, but Jeſus Chriſt is Jehovah, therefore he is ſelf-exiſtent.

In this ſenſe our Lord ſays in the Text, if ye believe not that I AM, that Jehovah is in me of a truth, ye ſhall die in your ſins. I AM cannot relate to his created being: All the ſophiſtry of arianiſm and ſocinianiſm cannot wreſt the words to ſuch a ſenſe, becauſe the Jews could not but believe that he exiſted, when they heard him ſay, I AM; or if it was poſſible to diſbelieve it, yet it would not have been a capital crime, unleſs he had been ſomething more than a created being: Therefore the very reaſon of the thing proves, that he claimed ſome manner of exiſtence different from human, and which it is abſolutely neceſſary for every man to believe, unleſs he would die in his ſins, and ſuffer the puniſhment due to them for

for ever. The tranſlators have done great injury to this ſcripture by inſerting the word *he*, I AM *he*, which is not in the original, and by putting it in they have deſtroyed both the ſenſe of the paſſage, and alſo the force of the argument: For I am *he* ought to refer to ſomething ſaid; but it has no reference, no ſort of connection, either with what goes before or follows after. And therefore it is as abſurd to inſert the word here, as it would be in *Exodus*, whereupon *Moſes*'s enquiring for ſome deſcriptive name, by which the *Iſraelites* might know that the God of their fathers had ſent him to deliver them, " God ſaid unto him, I AM THAT " I AM, and thou ſhalt ſay unto the chil- " dren of *Iſrael*, I AM hath ſent me unto " you." Would it not be abominable nonſenſe to read the words, I am he that I am he, and I am he hath ſent me unto you. The learned world, chriſtians and jews, would not allow of this glaring abſurdity; for they have allowed that this paſſage in *Exodus* is expreſſive of the ſelf-exiſtence of the Deity. I AM denotes the neceſſary manner in which he exiſts, and ſince this is the meaning of it in one part of ſcripture, certainly it muſt mean the ſame thing in every part of ſcripture, eſpecially when it is uſed by a perſon, who claimed to himſelf all the attributes of divinity; and therefore the meaning of the expreſſion, if there was any obſcurity in the uſage of it in the new teſta-

ment,

ment, may be clearly aſcertained from its uſage in the old. When God ſent *Moſes* to the *Iſraelites* with this divine name I AM, and when Chriſt, who never ſcrupled to call himſelf God, aſſumed the ſame name I AM, certainly the ſame words ſpoken on the ſame ſubject muſt convey the ſame idea of ſelf-exiſtence, and whoever is ſelf-exiſtent is the true God, but Chriſt is ſelf-exiſtent, therefore he is the true God.

When the arians and ſocinians are preſſed hard with ſcripture arguments, they will allow Chriſt to be God in ſome limitted and reſtrained ſenſe of the word; but they cannot bear to hear of his ſelf-exiſtence, becauſe this makes him equal with the father which they deny: For it ſeems an inſuperable difficulty to them, that he whom the ſcripture calls a ſon ſhould have the ſame ſelf-exiſtence with the father. This is a ſtanding objection with them, and with every other ſpecies of infidels, but this objection upon the true ſtate of the caſe vaniſhes at once: For it is founded upon a very groſs miſtake, both of the nature of the doctrine, and alſo of the ſcripture explanation of it.

The nature of the doctrine is this. In the unity of the divine eſſence there are three perſons equal in all perfections and attributes, ſo that none is before or after other, none is greater or leſs than another, but the glory

glory is equal, the majeſty co-eternal. The trinity in unity is thus expreſſed in ſcripture, 1 *John* v. 7. *There are three that bear record in heaven, the father, the word, and the holy ghoſt, and theſe three are one.* " *One,* " ſays the unbeliever, How can that be? " How can three be one? that's a contra- " diction." If it be, it is a contradiction of his own making: For unleſs there be three in the ſame reſpect as they are one, which opinion could never be maintained by any man in his ſenſes, then he muſt take the contradiction upon himſelf; and there may be, for any thing he knows to the contrary, three perſons of one eſſence, unleſs he can prove that the unity of the eſſence abſolutely excludes perſonality. But before we can allow him this, he muſt firſt give us a plain account of the manner of the exiſtence of the divine eſſence, and muſt demonſtrate that it cannot admit of any perſons in it; which he cannot poſſibly demonſtrate by the light of nature. The moſt acute and enlightened genius is not equal to the ſubject. It is as far above his capacity, as the heavens are above the earth. Let him ſoar aloft upon the ſtrongeſt pinions of moral truth, and try to meaſure infinity with the longeſt chain of metaphyſical reaſoning, yet when he came down from his towering flight, he could give us no freſh intelligence concerning the divine exiſtence. The mode and

manner

manner of it would be ſtill unknown. We know that there is an immortal ſpirit united to the body; but does any philoſopher pretend to determine the mode of the exiſtence of this created ſpirit? What idea can he form of it? Whence does he borrow his idea? Or in what kind of language will he communicate it unto another? If he be not clear in this more eaſy point, how can he form an idea of the mode of exiſtence of Jehovah? Can he determine how an infinite ſpiritual eſſence exiſts? What idea has he of the manner of exiſtence of an eſſence, which was from eternity, and which was the firſt cauſe of all other beings? When unbelievers will write upon this ſubject, and ſettle the mode of exiſtence of an uncreated eſſence, than they may ſpeak with ſome certainty upon it. But while they confeſs, that they know not the mode of the divine exiſtence, and yet maintain that Jehovah cannot exiſt but in one perſon, is it not evident, that their conduct is inconſiſtent? For the perſonality is founded on the manner in which the eſſence exiſts; this they do not pretend to determine, and yet they deny the perſonality of the eſſence, and venture their eternity upon it. Is not this conduct abſurd and irrational? And will you then ever liſten to what unbelievers may aſſert concerning the manner of the divine exiſtence? For they are indeed abſolutely ignorant of it, and you may be aſſured

aſſured of their ignorance, if you only aſk them to account for the manner of the exiſtence of a created ſpirit. And when they give up this point, which they muſt, then urge this queſtion to them, How can you pretend to account for the manner of the exiſtence of an infinite uncreated ſpirit, after you have owned that you cannot account for the manner of the exiſtence of a finite created ſpirit? Even to pretend to it is a moſt glaring abſurdity; and therefore we may conclude upon the footing of human reaſon, that there may be three perſons in the unity of the divine eſſence, and the ſcripture poſitively maintains there are three, the father, the ſon, and the holy ſpirit, and theſe three are one. And

If nothing remain for the infidel to object to the ſtate of the doctrine, what can he offer againſt the ſcripture explanation of it? There can be no difficulty but what ariſes from the names of the divine perſons, father, ſon, and holy ſpirit, and theſe have been a great handle of objection, and are ſtill with unbelievers, who are ſo blinded with their vices, that they know nothing of the true ſenſe and meaning of ſcripture, but only look into it for matter of cavil: They ſuppoſe, with ignorance common to infidelity, that theſe names were to give us ideas of the manner, in which the perſons exiſt in the eſſence, but the ſcripture had a

quite different view in uſing them. The ever bleſſed trinity took the names of father, ſon, and holy ſpirit, not to deſcribe in what manner they exiſt as divine perſons, but in what manner the divine perſons have acted for us, and for our ſalvation. Theſe names were to give us ideas of the diſtinct offices, which the trinity had agreed to ſuſtain in the œconomy of our redemption. The ſcripture informs us, St. *Paul* frequently, *Eph.* i. 4, 3, 11. 2 *Tim.* i. 9. *Titus* i. 2, *&c.* and St. *Peter* firſt *Ep.* i. 20, that the covenant of grace was made before the world, and the gracious plan of man's ſalvation was ſettled before he had his being. According to the plan of this covenant one of the divine perſons agreed to demand infinite ſatisfaction for ſin, when mankind ſhould offend, and to be the father of the human nature of Jeſus Chriſt, and our father through him; and therefore he is called God the *Father*, not to deſcribe his nature, but his office. Another of the divine perſons covenanted to become a ſon, to take our nature upon him, and in it to pay the infinite ſatisfaction for ſin, and therefore he is called *Son*, *Son of God*, and ſuch like names, not to deſcribe his divine nature, but his divine office. Another of the divine perſons covenanted to make the infinite ſatisfaction of the Son of God effectual, by inſpiring the ſpirits of men, and diſpoſing them

to

to receive it, and therefore he is called the holy *Inſpirer*, or holy Spirit, and the *ſpirit* of God, not to deſcribe his divine nature but his divine office. The terms *father*, *ſon*, *and holy ſpirit*, are terms of œconomy, and are accordingly uſed in ſcripture, to deſcribe the diſtinct parts, which the ever bleſſed and adorable trinity ſuſtained in our redemption.

I wiſh it was in my power to explain my meaning in a manner, which you may all eaſily underſtand. The doctrine of the trinity is the moſt neceſſary article of the chriſtian religion, and we cannot take one ſafe ſtep in the way to heaven, without being clear in it. And ſince it is the very foundation of your faith, I therefore intreat your more particular attention, while I am conſidering it. The ſcripture makes no difference between the divine perſons, except what is made by the diſtinct offices, which they ſuſtain in the covenant of grace. The perſons are each equal in every perfection and attribute; none is before or after other; none is greater or leſs than another; but the whole three perſons are co-eternal together and co-equal. And conſequently Chriſt, who was from eternity co-equal with the father, did not make himſelf inferior, becauſe he covenanted to become a ſon, nor did the holy ſpirit, who was from eternity co-equal with the father and the ſon, make

himſelf inferior, becauſe he covenanted to make the ſpirits of men holy by his grace and influence. Son and holy ſpirit are names of office, and the names of their offices certainly cannot leſſen the dignity of their nature, but ſhould rather exalt them in our eyes, for whoſe ſalvation they condeſcended to ſuſtain theſe offices. Our bleſſed Lord was Jehovah, when he covenanted to be made fleſh, and to become a ſon; and the very nature and terms of the covenant prove, that at the making of it he muſt have been a perſon of the ſelf-exiſtent eſſence, becauſe he had thereby ſuch offices committed to him, as none but the true God was able to ſuſtain. The whole œconomy and government of the world, from the time of its creation to the final diſſolution, was put into his hands, and therefore the ſcripture expreſſly aſſures us, that he created it, that he governs it by his providence, that he redeemed it by his blood, and that he is to come again at the laſt day, in all his glory to judge it. And he, who was almighty to create all things, who was all-wiſe to govern all things, who had infinite merit to redeem all things, and who is to be God the judge of all at the laſt great day, certainly this almighty, this all-wiſe, this all-meritorious, and divine judge, muſt be ſelf-exiſtent. And being poſſeſſed of theſe offices, he might truly ſay, I AM; becauſe he could not but have neceſſary exiſtence in himſelf, who

was

was the firſt cauſe, and who gave exiſtence to every other being and thing.

What has been ſaid in defence of the firſt propoſition in the text may be ſummed up with this argument. The divine eſſence is ſelf-exiſtent, therefore the perſons in the eſſence are alſo ſelf-exiſtent, but Jeſus Chriſt is one of the perſons in the eſſence, for he is frequently called Jehovah in the old teſtament, and the new declares, that he and the father are one, conſequently he is ſelf-exiſtent; from whence I raiſe this ſyllogiſm. Whoever is ſelf-exiſtent is the true God, but Jeſus Chriſt is ſelf-exiſtent, therefore he is the true God. This is a plain ſyllogiſm, and it is ſo evident upon ſcripture principles, that I defy all the arians and ſocinians in the world to anſwer it; for it ſeems as certain that Jeſus Chriſt is a perſon of the ſelf-exiſtent eſſence, as that there is a ſelf-exiſtent eſſence. Chriſt is the great and eternal I AM, true and very God, equal in all things with the father and the holy ſpirit, as touching his Godhead, and therefore to the holy bleſſed and glorious trinity, we aſcribe equal dominion and honour and worſhip, now and for ever, according to the doctrine of ſcripture, and the conſtant practice of the chriſtian church. And

Let no perſon think, that this is a ſpeculative point. It is not an indifferent thing, whether you receive it or not, but your eternal ſtate depends upon it. You muſt receive

receive it, or periſh for ever; for whoſoever diſbelieves it ſhall be damned. This may ſound very harſh in the ears of free and candid diſquiſitors, but I really cannot ſoften it. I am not fond of thundering out damnation, any more than men in theſe moderate times may be of hearing it, and you know that I very ſeldom have the word in my mouth; but there is certainly ſuch a thing as damnation, and the Almighty has threatned to inflict it upon the deniers of Chriſt's divinity, and let men make ever ſo light of it, he will infallibly inflict it, and therefore I muſt again admoniſh you, that whoever does not believe Jeſus Chriſt to be ſelf-exiſtent, and thereby equal to the father, ſhall be damned. And does not the text declare the ſame thing? *They ſhall die in their ſins*, and this is ſo far from being any thing ſhort of damnation, that *dying in ſin* is the very loweſt ſtate of infernal miſery, as I am to prove under the

Second propoſition. If ye believe not that I AM, ſays Chriſt, *ye ſhall die in your ſins*. Dying in ſin is a clear expreſſion, whoſe meaning cannot eaſily be miſtaken. It denotes the moſt dreadful ſtate of departing ſinners, who have no mediator or atonement in the world of ſpirits to which they are going, but they leave this world with all the pollution and guilt of their crimes upon the ſoul, and when they appear before the tribunal of infinite juſtice, the horrid deformity

mity and wickedneſs of them will then be manifeſt: they will then have no robe to cover the offenſive and nauſeous leproſy of their impurities; their abominable filthineſs will then break out, and how can the moſt holy and pure God look with delight upon theſe loathſome lepers? He declares he cannot. He is of purer eyes than to behold the leaſt iniquity. He cannot behold them; and therefore they muſt be ſhut out of his preſence, as the lepers were ſhut out of the camp; and ſince they never can be made clean, they muſt be ſhut out for ever. Nothing can purge the conſcience from ſin, but the all-meritorious blood of Jeſus Chriſt. This alone cleanſeth us from all ſin; but this unbelievers reject, therefore their ſin remaineth. They muſt anſwer for it at the bar of juſtice, and whatever puniſhment it deſerves they muſt ſuffer it in ſoul and body, and if there be truth in God, their puniſhment muſt be eternal. Theſe are his own words, at which one might reaſonably think the heart of the moſt obdurate infidel would tremble. *Iſa.* xxxiii. 13, 14. *Hear ye that are far off, what I have done, and ye that are near acknowledge my might. The ſinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulneſs hath ſurpriſed the hypocrites; who among us ſhall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us ſhall dwell with everlaſting burnings?* Who ſhall? Certainly they who die in their ſins. Sin firſt kindled theſe flames of hell, and ſinners muſt endure

dure them. And the chief of ſinners, the arians and ſocinians, muſt dwell with the devouring fire, and with the everlaſting burnings.

I have ſeen the deniers of Chriſt's divinity very warm and angry at this ſtate of the caſe, and have heard them complain loudly of our want of charity. They do not love to be told of hell torments, and they think it very hard, that they ſhould be ſent to hell for a ſpeculative point, (as they ſoftly term rejecting Chriſt's ſelf-exiſtence) quite an harmleſs opinion, a mere ſubject of debate and free enquiry. It may ſeem very light to them, but it is in fact of the ſame conſequence as denying the being of God, and if they will make their free enquiries and debates about it, and after enquiring and debating reject it, they ſhould remember, that they do this at the peril of their lives. Denying Chriſt to be ſelf-exiſtent is not a ſmall crime, it is the greateſt that a man can commit; for what is it to deny the king's title to the crown? Is it not high treaſon? And what is it then to deny the Godhead of the bleſſed and only potentate, the king of kings, and lord of lords? Is not this high treaſon againſt the ſupreme majeſty of heaven? And when unbelievers deny the Godhead of Jeſus Chriſt, rob him of his ſelf-exiſtence, erect ſocieties on purpoſe to ſtab him with their inſolent blaſphemies, and try to pull him out of his eternal throne,

and

and then endeavour what in them lies, to ſtrip him of his divine glory, degrading and ſinking him down into a mere creature, and trampling under foot, as if he were but droſs and dung, the moſt adorable God of heaven and earth, what will you call theſe offences? Are they not overt-acts of open rebellion and of high treaſon? And if the leaſt of theſe againſt an earthly king would render the offenders unnatural rebels and worthy of death, muſt not the crimes increaſe in proportion to the infinite dignity of the king againſt whom they are committed? High treaſon againſt the Godhead of Jeſus Chriſt, how much ſoever unbelievers may try to palliate it, is certainly an infinite crime, and if God be true, it will meet with an infinite puniſhment; for if ye believe not that I AM, ſays the ſelf-exiſtent God himſelf, ye ſhall die in your ſins, and theſe unatoned for ſhall not only exclude you from the glories of heaven, but ſhall alſo ſentence you to the endleſs torments of hell.

And this Method of proceeding againſt the deniers of Chriſt's ſelf-exiſtence is not, as they would inſinuate, harſh, and rigorous, but is founded in reaſon and equity; becauſe every man is a ſinner, and guilty in the ſight of God, not only by actual, but alſo by original tranſgreſſion, *by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation*, and therefore all men being un-

der ſentence of condemnation, want an atonement for their ſins. This atonement is required by, and is to be made to, infinite juſtice, and whoever makes it muſt be an infinite perſon, capable of doing an infinitely meritorious act; ſo that he cannot be any thing leſs than a perſon of the ſelf-exiſtent eſſence. If he were a creature of ever ſo great dignity, the very higheſt in the rank of beings, yet as he is but a creature, he could do no action which could merit for another, much leſs which could have infinite merit; conſequently he could make no atonement to infinite juſtice, and therefore unleſs Chriſt be ſelf-exiſtent, we muſt all die in our ſins, and anſwer for them before the tribunal of God: And the juſt wages of ſin is death, death of the body to this world, and death of both body and ſoul from God and his glory in the next world for ever and ever. And this is indeed the melancholy caſe of every infidel. He denies the virtue of Chriſt's merits to atone as God, and of courſe he can have no atonement; for nothing leſs than an infinite being can make an infinite atonement; and the infidel without ſuch an atonement muſt be under the guilt both of original and actual tranſgreſſion. He has no ſacrifice, no atonement to propitiate the juſtice of God the father, by whom a firm and ſure decree has been in this caſe made and provided, that *without ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion:*

But

But he rejects the merits of the blood of the lamb of God, which has been ſhed for ſin, and which alone can take away the ſins of the world; for which reaſon there is no remiſſion for him, but he dies in his ſins with all the pollution and the guilt of them upon his conſcience, and when he appears at the bar of juſtice he will find his judge a jealous God, and a conſuming fire. And how will he then be able to protect himſelf from the wrath of the Almighty? Offended omnipotence he cannot eſcape, he cannot reſiſt, and who can ſay what a degree of miſery offended omnipotence will inflict? Oh it is a dreadful thing, beyond imagination dreadful, to fall into the hands of the living God! and whoever rejects the divine merits of Chriſt's atonement, will feel his everlaſting diſpleaſure: for after rejecting them *there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which ſhall devour the adverſaries. And if he who deſpiſed* Moſes's *law died without mercy, under two or three witneſſes: of how much ſorer puniſhment, ſuppoſe ye, ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath troden under foot the ſon of God*—hath *troden under foot* his divinity (as all infidels do) hath trampled, and even ſtamped upon the ſelf-exiſtent God, as if he was ſomething baſer than a worm, *and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was ſanctified an unholy thing, and hath done deſpite*

unto the ſpirit of grace—Doing deſpite unto the ſpirit of grace is the laſt ſtage of infidelity, and may the almighty God keep every one of you from it, leſt you ſhould die in your ſins and periſh for ever.

I choſe to finiſh the ſecond propoſition in the text with theſe ſtriking words of St. *Paul*, (*Heb.* 10, 26, 27, &c.) becauſe they are clear and full to the point, and expreſly declare the judgment and fiery indignation, which every one will meet with who treads under feet the ſon of God. Let the infidel conſider, whether he does not tread him under his feet, when he ridicules the almighty Creator of the world, and with treaſon blacker than ever was hatched in hell, tries to rob the eternal God of his divinity. Does not he account the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, who ſets no value upon the moſt precious blood of the lamb of God? And muſt not he die in his ſins, and riſe from the dead in his ſins, and appear in his ſins at the laſt great day, and go with his ſins to the place of eternal puniſhment, who contrary to God's decree has reſolved to put his trial upon this iſſue, that without ſhedding of blood there may be remiſſion? Before any remiſſion can be obtained, there muſt not only be blood ſhed, but alſo blood of an infinite value, and there cannot be infinite value in any ſacrifice, except in the precious blood of Chriſt, as of a lamb without blemiſh, and without ſpot. The merits

of

of this unblemiſhed and ſpotleſs lamb the infidels deny, whereby they reject the only method which God has appointed for the remiſſion of ſins. This crime approaches ſo very near to doing deſpite to the ſpirit of grace, and to grieving and quenching him, that my heart mourns for theſe deluded men, and I cannot but wiſh they were as much concerned for their own ſalvation, as I am for them. I ſee their guilt, to which they are blind. I ſee their danger, againſt which they ſhut their own eyes. I behold them ready to die in their ſins, and the pit of deſtruction open to receive them, they are on the very precipice, and in a moment may fall into hell. My dear fellow-creatures, would to God I could call you fellow-chriſtians, if you have any love left for your immortal ſouls, ſtop and conſider. Open your eyes I beſeech you, and ſee your danger. See how near you are to the pit. If you take one ſtep more, you may periſh for ever. And why will you chooſe eternal miſery? I call upon and intreat you, while there is yet a poſſibility of eſcaping it, to awaken your hopes and fears: If you can but throw down your arms and ſubmit, ſtill you may find mercy. The God againſt whom ye have rebelled will pardon, if ye aſk it of him with faith and repentance, and he will give you faith and repentance, if you can pray for them. His breaſt is full of compaſſion for you. And you will taſte of his

pardon-

pardoning love, ſo ſoon as you acknowledge him to be a God almighty to pardon. And if none of theſe motives can prevail with you to open your eyes, may he, who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, ſhine into your hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jeſus Chriſt.

And now having gone through the argument, I intreat you, my brethren, to give me your favourable attention, while I am endeavouring to make my advantage of what has been ſaid, and to bring it home with power and conviction to your hearts. The ſcripture which we have been conſidering is moſt awful and ſolemn, and holds out to us a doctrine of eternal importance, *viz.* that we muſt die in our ſins, unleſs we believe the ſelf-exiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt. This doctrine I divided into two propoſitions, under the firſt it was propoſed to prove that Jeſus Chriſt is a perſon of the ſelf-exiſtent eſſence, from whence it followed, *ſecondly*, that every one muſt die in his ſins, unleſs he believes Chriſt's ſelf-exiſtence. And if reaſon and fair argument could prevail againſt mens prejudices and ſins, thoſe two propoſitions would appear as evident as the ſun at noon-day. Indeed they do appear with compleat evidence to every true chriſtian, and I openly declare, that I am as fully convinced of the ſelf-exiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt, as I am of my own exiſtence, and therefore with this full conviction

upon

upon my mind, it was incumbent upon me to ſpeak with great openneſs and freedom to thoſe perſons, if there be any of them among you, who deny the ſelf-exiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt. And I hope he will ſecond my intreaties with his grace, and accompany them with his divine bleſſing, while I am calling upon you once more to conſider and to weigh impartially the arguments which have been now laid before you. They contain a very ſmall part of the evidence for our Lord's divinity. The ſcripture has offered us ſeveral proofs, which have not been at preſent touched upon; but I hope enough has been ſaid to convince you, if your minds lay open to conviction. The great infidel objection againſt Chriſt's ſelf-exiſtence is taken from the unity of the divine eſſence; this unity we allow, for it is written, *Deut.* vi. 4. *The Lord our God is one Lord, Jehovah our Aleim is one Jehovah*; but then we maintain that the unity of the eſſence cannot exclude perſonality, unleſs it could be demonſtrated, that the manner in which the eſſence exiſts will not admit of any perſons in it. But this you cannot demonſtrate. It is impoſſible to demonſtrate it; becauſe you do not know the manner of the exiſtence of any ſpiritual being, and conſequently it is impoſſible for you to demonſtrate, that the ſcripture account of the perſonality is falſe, and yet at the peril of your eternal ſalvation you will venture to deny what it is impoſſible you ſhould diſ-

prove.

prove. Do you not ſee what an inconſiſtent and abſurd part you herein act? Do you not openly fight againſt reaſon, as well as againſt ſcripture and your own happineſs? You have not the ſhadow of an argument againſt Chriſt's divinity, and yet you are not afraid to commit high treaſon againſt *his* ſupreme majeſty, who is almighty to puniſh. Why, my brethren, will you fight againſt the Almighty? Rebel no longer, throw down your arms, ſubmit to Jeſus, proſtrate yourſelves before him, and acknowledge him to be the ſelf-exiſtent God. And

Let it be no hindrance to your owning his divinity, that the ſcripture calls him a *ſon, ſon of God, ſon of man, &c.* for ſon is a name of office, and not of nature; it is not to give you an idea of the manner of his divine exiſtence, but of the manner of his divine actions. He was the true ſelf-exiſtent God, he was Jehovah from eternity, but he took the name of ſon, when he covenanted to become a ſon, and to be made fleſh for us and for our ſalvation; ſo that it is a name of œconomy, deſcriptive not of his nature, but of his office. This is the ſcripture doctrine. And there is not one infidel objection againſt the ſelf-exiſtence of Jeſus Chriſt, but what may be eaſily ſolved upon this ſtate of the caſe. I entreat you therefore to examine it carefully, and if you will give it a fair hearing, laying all prejudice aſide, you will not be able to reſiſt the force and evidence of it.

But if you will ſhut your hearts againſt conviction, rooted and grounded ſo deeply and ſtrongly in infidelity, that no arguments can move you, yet if reaſon has loſt its influence, will not ſelf-love make ſome impreſſion upou you? When the danger draws near, and your own ſouls are ready to periſh, certainly you will then begin to be concerned for your own welfare. And does not the danger come near enough to ſtrike your fears, when you are dying in your ſins? when you are guilty of a crime, the certain conſequence of which (unrepented of) is everlaſting miſery? And if Jeſus Chriſt be not your God, you will have no atonement, no mediator after death, but muſt anſwer for every ſin, which you have committed, at the bar of infinite juſtice, and you may read your ſentence among the records of infallible truth — *The unbelieving ſhall have their part in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimſtone: which is the ſecond death, Rev.* xxi. 8. This ſcripture will as ſurely be fulfilled, as God is true; and he will be almighty to fulfil it in your deſtruction: For are you not unbelieving? Do you not diſbelieve the firſt article of the chriſtian faith? And why then ſhould you hope to eſcape the puniſhment here threatened to unbelief? You can have no reaſonable hope. God, who cannot lie, muſt execute his threatenings. And do you think it prudent and ſafe to make the trial, whether he

be a God of truth? If you believe not, yet he abideth faithful. If you deny him, he alſo will deny you. And when he diſowns you for his, juſtice muſt ſeize you and deliver you over to the tormentors, that this ſcripture may be fulfilled in your puniſhment. Oh! my brethren, if your ſouls be dear and precious in your own eyes, do not chooſe hell torments? Why will you die in your ſins, and go deliberately into the lake, that burneth with fire and brimſtone for ever? Might not one infer from your conduct; that you were in love with hell? For you cannot prove, that Jeſus Chriſt is not God. It is impoſſible to prove it; and why then will you deny his divinity and with overt-acts of high treaſon attempt to rob him of his ſelf-exiſtence? Why will you act ſuch an abſurd, ſuch a wicked part, and deſtroy yourſelves.

If I have not been able to offer any thing ſufficient to awaken and to convince you, I have therefore more reaſon in the laſt place to pray for you. And I am ſure all believers will join heartily with me in prayer to God for your converſion. We cannot but mourn over your preſent guilt, and your approaching ruin, and pour out our requeſts before the throne of grace for you, becauſe we are aſſured, that you have departed from the living God. And let us now, my chriſtian brethren, conclude, as we always begin, with looking up to God for his bleſſing, that

our

our labours may not be in vain in the Lord.

O moſt adorable Jeſus, our almighty God and Saviour, who haſt declared, that unleſs ye believe that I AM, ye ſhall die in your ſins, we bleſs and praiſe thee for giving us grace to believe in thy ſelf-exiſtence. Keep us, we beſeech thee, ſtedfaſt in this faith, and grant that it may not dwell in our heads, and reſt there as a ſpeculative point of ſcience, but enable it to operate upon our hearts, and there to produce in us all thy ſweet and heavenly tempers, making us holy as thou art holy. And, O Lord, be pleaſed to awaken and convert all the deniers of thy divinity, and convince them that thou art a God indeed, by the happy work of thy good ſpirit upon their hearts, turning them from the error of their ways, and bringing every one of them into thy flock, that we may become one fold under one ſhepherd, and may with one heart and one voice give thanks and praiſe to father, ſon, and holy ghoſt, the holy, bleſſed and glorious trinity, to whom be equal honour and worſhip, and dominion, now and for ever. *Amen.*

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